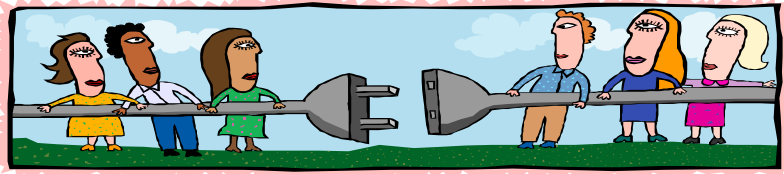


Consumer Connection



Informed Consumers, Quality Utility Services, and a Dedicated Organization for Missourians in the 21st Century

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Public Information & Education Department

Task Force to Examine Cold Weather Rule

The Commission has opened a case to examine possible programs for improving long term energy affordability for those in need of assistance, and to propose any immediate changes to the Commission's Cold Weather Rule that may provide short term help.

The Cold Weather Rule was established in 1977 and has helped more than 2 million needy Missourians maintain heat-related service during the winter. Since 1977, the Cold Weather Rule has undergone some changes including 1993 when the rule was modified expanding the time the rule is in effect as well as adopting a temperature moratorium.

The task force will be co-chaired by Warren Wood, Manager of the PSC Energy Department, and Gay Fred, Manager of the PSC Consumer Services Department. The task force will hold regional meetings to get public input. An initial report with recommendations to the Commission will be made by April 14, 2004.

PSC Establishes Calling Scopes Working Group

The PSC has issued an order establishing a working group to investigate the Metropolitan Calling Area Plan (MCA) and rural calling scopes in Missouri.

The Commission anticipates that this working group will investigate and consider whether the MCA plan, and calling scopes in general, should be amended, and if so, how. The working group is expected to explore the costs of modifying or expanding the MCA and then determine whether consumers would consider the benefits sufficient to outweigh the costs.

MCA is a service allowing expanded calling in the Kansas City, Springfield and St. Louis metropolitan areas. For a flat monthly rate, subscribing customers can call neighboring exchanges toll-free.

The working group is expected to evaluate rural calling scopes in Missouri as well. Included in this review is to be a thorough analysis of whether, and if so, what type of changes should be made to rural calling scopes.

Lowering Your Room Air Conditioner's Energy Use

A little planning before installing your air conditioner will save you energy and money. The unit should be level when installed, so that the inside drainage system and other mechanisms operate efficiently. If possible, install the unit in a shaded spot on your home's north or east side. Direct sunshine on the unit's outdoor heat exchanger decreases efficiency by as much as 10%. You can plant trees and shrubs to shade the air conditioner, but do not block the airflow.

Don't place lamps or televisions near your air conditioner's thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

Consider setting your air conditioner's thermostat as high as is comfortably possible in the summer. The less difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be. And don't set your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and, therefore, unnecessary expense.

Set the fan speed on high, except on very humid days. When humidity is high, set the fan speed on low for more comfort. The low speed on humid days will cool your home better and will remove more moisture from the air because of slower air movement through the cooling equipment. Consider using an interior fan in conjunction with your window air conditioner to spread the cooled air more effectively through your home without greatly increasing electricity use.

Proper maintenance of your air conditioner will also save energy. Be sure to do the following:

At the start of each cooling season, inspect the seal between the air conditioner and the window frame to ensure it makes contact with the unit's metal case. Moisture can damage this seal, allowing cool air to escape from your house.

Check your unit's air filter once a month and clean or replace filters as necessary. Keeping the filter clean can lower your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5% to 15%.

Occasionally pass a stiff wire through the unit's drain channels. Clogged drain channels prevent a unit from reducing humidity, and the resulting excess moisture may discolor walls or carpet.

In the winter, either cover your room air conditioner or remove and store it.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



Local Public Hearings - Missouri Gas Energy

The Missouri Public Service Commission will hold local public hearings to receive customer comment on a natural gas rate case filed by Missouri Gas Energy.



Joplin - April 27, 2004

6:00 pm*

Matthews Hall Auditorium
Missouri Southern State College
3950 East Newman Road

Blue Springs - April 28, 2004

1:00 pm*

Fleming Meeting Hall
21906 Woods Chapel Road

Kanas City - April 28, 2004

6:00 pm*

Jackson County Courthouse
Legislative Assembly Area
415 East 12th Street, 2nd Floor

St. Joseph - April 29, 2004

6:00 pm*

City Council Chambers
1100 Frederick Avenue

*The PSC Staff will conduct a general information session starting at this time to answer any questions customers may have. The information session will be followed by the local public hearing.

Missouri Customers to Receive Approximately \$30.3 Million in Natural Gas Refunds

Under settlements recently approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), approximately \$30.3 million in refunds will go to Missouri natural gas customers of Missouri Gas Energy, Union Electric Company (d/b/a AmerenUE), Aquila Networks - MPS, Atmos Energy and City Utilities of Springfield. These refunds come from cases involving Kansas ad valorem taxes unlawfully collected during the period of 1983 and 1988 by natural gas producers from Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline and Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line customers.

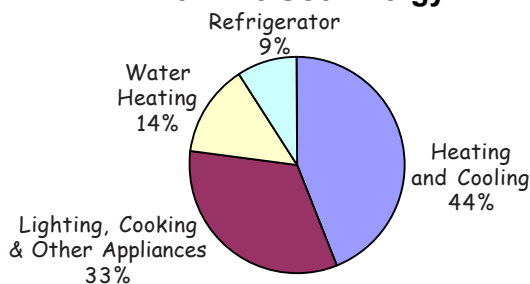
"The Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission has been very involved in this case, aggressively representing the interests of Missouri ratepayers before the FERC and the courts," stated PSC Chairman Steve Gaw. "Through the PSC Staff's hard work and the work of others, Missouri consumers will benefit from these refunds this spring."

The PSC continues to litigate an additional \$11 million in refund claims against Pioneer Natural Resources USA, Inc. FERC hearings related to those claims were held in August and October 2003. The PSC, with the assistance of the Missouri Attorney General's office, is also pursuing certain unpaid refunds other parties have deemed uncollectible.

HOME ENERGY USE

Did you know the typical U.S. family spends close to \$1,300 per year on their home's utility bills? Making your home more energy efficient will not only save you money, but can also improve the value of your home. Energy conservation helps reduce air pollution and conserves natural resources.

How We Use Energy



Source: U.S. Department of Energy

A Simple Home Energy Audit Could Save You Money

- **Check** for holes or cracks around walls, ceilings, windows, doors, light and plumbing fixtures. These openings can leak air in or out of your home.
- **Check** if your appliances and heating and cooling systems are properly maintained. Replace or clean filters as needed.
- **Check** the chimney. If you have a fireplace or wood stove, keep the flue damper closed when it is not in use.
- **Check** and clean warm-air registers and cold-air returns. Make sure they are not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes.

For printed materials regarding a number of consumer issues or copies of this newsletter, please call 573-751-7491 or email joyce.neuner@psc.mo.gov



Who to Contact:

Missouri Public Service Commission
Consumer Hotline **1-800-392-4211**
or email: pscinfo@psc.mo.gov
visit our website: www.psc.mo.gov

Mail your inquiry or complaint to:

Missouri Public Service Commission
Consumer Services Department
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0360